

chances quite fairly, and you think so and so pushes, and is greedy, and someone else is slack, and you brighten up all three. And then the morning is over. You go out. Here is ample opportunity.

But what of the time that has gone? Perhaps I look for trees from mustard seed. Yet, after five years, could we say the children have taken very rapid strides up the path we should like them to tread? We must, of course, expect them to run in accordance with their own natures, not with ours. Yet, when that is considered, what has been done?

We have gone through the morning with vigour and alertness, correcting, inspiring, encouraging, making, I am sure, great steps towards culture, and leaving behind a pleasant memory of an intellectual atmosphere and valuable amount of knowledge. Have we done more than that? Of course we *can*, but how? Are we perhaps too diffident in using what personal influence we possess? Or perhaps too prone to take second best work, or not insistent enough on the children being self-respecting and respondent? Perhaps some of you will be able to say where and why failure is? I am sure none of us who were Miss Mason's friends will say it is because the standard is too high.

During the discussion which followed Miss Lawrence suggested that the great cause of failure in character training was due to the fact that children were too much waited on when young, and so miss the pleasure of being useful to other people.

Miss Wilkinson remarked that we must make opportunities for the children to wait on us and themselves as an exercise in unselfishness.

Miss Drury closed the discussion by thanking Miss Allen for her paper, saying that she had raised questions on matters difficult to us all, and that we should probably find her clear statement of them would be a great help to us in our future work.

READING ALOUD.

L. LEES.

ON MAKING CHILDREN ANXIOUS TO READ ALOUD
REALLY WELL.

When we were students at Scale How, we were always haunted, especially during criticism lessons, by a phantom called "The Living Idea." It was bad enough when we were giving the lesson ourselves, but we did not escape when it was someone else's turn; for even then, we were always liable to be suddenly attacked with the question, "What Living Ideas could have been put into that lesson?"

This phantom has pursued us even to our teaching days, when we realize in all its fulness the paramount importance of the "Living Idea."

Especially does it apply to reading aloud. One of the fruits which this Living Idea bears is *Co-operation*. If the children are working with you, eagerly, hand and glove, much may be accomplished; and if the parents are working with you as well, why, then it is better still.

May I tell you one or two of the plans which we have adopted?

It is the custom in this house for mother and grannie (if she be there), to come into the schoolroom every Saturday morning at 11-30. The programme never varies; it is the same as that in the P.R. School at Scale How, only at the end, each child in turn solemnly mounts an improvised platform, and reads aloud either their own composition or their nature notes (which have been rehearsed beforehand, one child criticising the other). One term we did the story of Beowulf in this way; and Saturday by Saturday a new part came out, and was eagerly looked forward to by the audience.

At the end of each term the children know that they will

have to read aloud to the head of the house, who is very particular, and they prepare for him with great zeal, taking willingly all sorts of hints to prepare them for the great events; and one gets remarks such as this: "Do you think it is quite good enough yet?" "No." "Oh, well then I must practise a little more by myself."

We hope very soon to have a Scale How Tuesday in miniature, when the beautiful rendering of certain passages by their parents will inspire the children to still greater efforts.

Miss Lees' paper was read by Miss Goode.

Miss Drury wondered whether it is good for children to be encouraged to criticise each other.

Miss Allen said she had found this plan very helpful with Classes III. and II.

Miss Brookes wanted to know the value of prepared reading over fluent sight reading.

Miss Allen said she thought the examination in prepared reading was only to show the weekly improvement.

Miss Barnett then most kindly read an interesting paper on the "Art of Reading Aloud," which contained many valuable demonstrations.

Afterwards a few questions were asked, and there was a slight discussion on some minor points.

Books recommended :—

"The Speaking Voice" (breathing exercises), by Emil Behnke.

"The Art of Reading and Speaking," by Canon Fleming.

THE ART OF READING ALOUD.

The subject on which I have been asked to speak to you to-day is that of the "Art of Reading Aloud," and it has been a great pleasure to me to try and put together some ideas and suggestions which I have thought likely to help you in your own studies of this subject. The fact of your asking for such a paper from me has been a great encouragement to me in my efforts to make good reading a feature of our College work, for it has shewed to me that you recognise the importance of this oft-neglected branch of study, and are willing to do all you can to hasten the day when the good reader shall be the rule and not the exception. The more we train our ears to hear, and our minds to *kindle* criticism, the more aware shall we become of how few good readers there are to-day; and the more we ourselves study the subject, the more shall we see how much the world loses through this scarcity. We *are* waking up to the fact that good reading is largely a matter of regular and well-directed individual study and practice. Let us see to it that, in this as well as in all other branches of our teaching, because we *are* what we are, we *can*, and because we *can* we *ought*. The final act of *volition* will then surely follow.

I hope to shew you in the short time at my disposal that the power of right voice production, and all other essentials of good reading, lie within the reach of every one of us, and that this study is one of intense and ever-increasing interest.

The *great essentials* of good reading are three in number :

1. That the reader shall be heard.
2. That the reader shall be able to sustain the voice.
3. That he shall be able to interpret to the mind of the listener the mind of the author.

Of these three essentials the first two are, as we shall see, more or less physical, the third, mental.

First, then, "that the readers shall be heard."—Now, behind every production of art lies the mechanism or means, through the use of which such a production has been made possible. What then is—to use Behnke's phrase—"the mechanism of the human voice?"

We all know, I suppose, that the *sound* of the human voice is generated in the larynx, or "Adam's Apple," by means of the passage of a column—or rather, a *spiral*—of air through that larynx, and that whereas the varying tension of the vocal chords in the larynx, and the position of the larynx itself alters the pitch and modulation of the voice; the *resonance* or *carrying power* of the voice depends upon the right *placing* of the sound with reference to the natural resonators.

What are the Resonators?—They are the teeth, the hard palate, the jaws, and the empty spaces situated at the back of the nose and among the bones of the front part of the face. You will notice that I do not include the chest as an *ordinary* resonator for a woman's speaking voice. It has a most important function, as you will see later, but it is only for the production of particular effects that a woman would use chest tones in speaking and reading. Now, apart from distinctness of utterance, *i.e.*, articulation, of which I hope to speak presently, we shall find that the resonance or carrying power of the voice depends on the sound being thrown well to the front of the face.

"Lock the sound at the back of the front teeth in the front of the face so that there is no slipping back into the throat," is a rule which applies as much for speakers and readers as for singers. You may have nothing much of a singing voice, but you can all prove the truth of what I say by humming on some easy tone, with closed lips, beginning softly and getting the tone bigger and bigger as you press the spiral of air into the front of the face. In a very short time the whole "masque," as the French call it, seems to reverberate with sound; but try the same thing, directing the tone *backwards*, and you can make no proper increase in the volume of tone. Hence we get our rule:

"Speak and read always to the front of the face so as to use all the natural resonators, then, in order to let the sound escape unhindered, open the mouth and teeth well, and keep the lips off the edge of the upper teeth when possible."

The next points to be considered in making ourselves heard are those of distinct articulation and right pronunciation. The latter we can dismiss in a few words, for right pronunciation is mostly a matter of giving purity of sound to the *vowels* of our language, and, therefore, it excludes all such things as provincialisms, bad accent, wrong quantities, and, in fact, all "sounds of our words which usage shows to be other than the best."

But *articulation* covers a much wider and, unfortunately, a much more neglected field of speech, for it includes the enunciation of all our *consonants and combinations of consonants*; and, as some one has said, "Consonants are the key to all cultured and distinct articulation." To attain true precision in the sounding of our consonants, we should not only study them separately, making sentences and lists of words for the special exercise of each one, whether at the beginning, middle, or end of the word, or in combination with other consonants; but we should also study very carefully the exact position in the mouth for the formation of each consonant *without its complementary vowel*, *e.g.*, F.V., D.T., M.N., B.P., &c. We should work away at these and the rest with loose jaw, open teeth, and flexible tongue and lips until we gain complete mastery over them.

Such sentences as "Face forward!" "Fight fairly," "The violent vulture visited the vineyard." Let us jealously guard the final consonants of our words, and particularly the final consonant of the last word in a sentence. With patient effort we can all arrive at that goal so necessary for being heard—*viz.*, that of distinct articulation. "Throw the consonants off the tip of the tongue and teeth, and remember that even so small a thing as the 'd' in 'and' has a right to recognition."

Here I would warn everyone never to allow any tacking on of an "e" to the end of "d" and "t," such as one occasionally hears. The true distinctness of these letters lies, not in any added vowel sound, but in the short, sharp down stroke of the tongue. The rigour of our beautiful mother tongue is largely dependent on the due articulation of our many consonants, and again and again we shall find how wonderfully the *sound of the word seems to convey the idea*.

Take those lines from Macaulay's "Horatius," and note

the force, the vigour, the harmony of sound and idea given by the consonants:

"And with a *crash*, like thunder,
Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream:
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed the yellow foam!"

So much then for our first essential.

We have considered the due articulation of our words and the right placing of the voice; but the second essential is that of rightly sustaining the voice—the retention of it—and this must be done by right breathing and by the right use of the diaphragm and big chest muscles. And here I must give a most important warning. *Never* put the tension on the throat in speaking and reading. This is the secret of fatigue in reading and speaking—of clergyman's sore throat and of elementary school teacher's loss of voice. Of course the voice gets overstrained if the wrong parts of the vocal mechanism are used and all the strain of heavy work put on the delicate larynx, while the strong chest muscles are left in idleness. Keep the larynx loose, and never to increase sound stiffen and harden it, or, as one might say, screw it up tight like a violin peg. For the listening ear there is many a valuable lesson to be learned as to the *wrong* use of the larynx from our street-cries; in fact we may make quite an interesting little study of what *not* to do by listening to the raucous cries of the newspaper boys and others.

Power will never come to stay if we harden and tighten the throat. To make the voice powerful we must put our tension on the big chest muscles, the expansion and control of which will do us nothing but good. Now to do this effectually we must not only expand the lungs so as to fill every part, but we must keep the chest bone or sternum *forward*, the collar-bones and shoulders *well down*, and the lungs both back and front under our control. This point brings us to the necessity for simple regular breathing exercises, and for these I know of none better than those given in Mrs. Behnke's little book.

The speaking voice. Here are examples of a few of

them which I have either taken as they are there or adapted, having found them specially useful.

[N.B.—In no exercise must the collar-bones rise: the chest bone comes forward, and is kept forward; in fact it is the last part of all to collapse.]

1. Breathe through the nostrils—mouth shut—taking in the breath slowly and steadily, filling the whole lungs from the base upwards. Exhale through the nose.
2. Same mode of inhaling; exhale slowly through the teeth with hissing sound.
3. Inhale as before; let the breath go quickly through open mouth.
4. Inhale quickly through the nose (easily done by lowering the soft palate at the back on to the tongue); exhale slowly, saying "ah" gently.
- 5.—Combine these with slow arm movements, and, during part of the time, hold the breath. Most of us in beginning to hold the breath find that we involuntarily do it with the throat, but we must avoid this completely; relax the whole throat and let the chest muscles do the work.

With such exercises as these done regularly in a well-ventilated room and with no constriction of the muscles, we can easily understand that greatly increased power is eventually gained over the breath-controlling muscles, and the throat is relieved from extra pressure, and hence from extra fatigue, and we are able to speak or read for quite a long time without getting tired.

So much, then, for the physical side of "reading aloud," which forms more or less of the necessary drudgery as much as finger exercises and scales for the would-be pianist.

Our third essential you will remember is that of being able to interpret to the mind of the hearer the mind of the author. To such a work as this we must bring a *trained eye* by which we can see ahead of what we are actually reading, a *vivid imagination* by which we actually live through every scene, and seize the salient points of every description; a *quick intelligence*, which enables us to grasp our arguments and turn with rapidity of thought from one point to another;

and a *quick insight* into and *sympathy with the minds of others*, so that we shall dive under the surface and bring to light hidden beauties of thought and expression: "True eloquence," says Sheridan, "is the art of placing truth in the most advantageous light for convincing and persuading men." Good reading ought to be like good painting. There are the high lights and the deep shadows, what is called in singing "tone-colour"; there are the dark tones of sorrow and tragedy, and the light ones of happiness and joy, the tones, round and rich, as when we read of things full in form, and grand and magnificent; the crisp-tripping tones; and the mixed tones which we use for such bits of pure word music as Tennyson's:

"Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea;
Low, low, breath and blow,
Wind of the western sea."

Expression, modulation, pause, emphasis, accent, rhythm, melody, pitch, intonation, cadence, speed, all these have their necessary place in good reading; but I can only say a little about two. For the others I will try to exemplify what I mean by reading various passages.

Let us consider for a moment the question of speed—the more full of ideas and imagery our descriptions, the more forceful and arresting our arguments, the more slowly, I think, we shall read, or, at least, the less likely we shall be to go too quickly if our hearers and ourselves are to grasp the mind of the author. For such writers as Shakespeare, Milton, Carlyle, "slow, slow, slow," is the golden rule. How can we read quickly if we are to read effectively the writings of those whose every phrase, and, at times, whose every word, gives some fresh mental picture? Take these few pregnant sentences from Carlyle, in illustration of my meaning:

"The green, flowery rock-built earth: the trees, the mountains, rivers, many sounding seas; that great, deep sea of azure that swims overhead: the winds, sweeping through it; the black cloud fashioning itself together, now pouring out fire, now hail, now rain, what is it? Ay, what? At bottom we do not yet know: we can never *know* at all. It is not by our own superior insight that we escape the difficulty,

it is by our superior levity, our inattention, our want of insight. It is by not thinking that we cease to wonder at it. . . . This world, after all our science, and sciences, is still a miracle: wonderful, inscrutable, magical and more—to whomsoever will think of it."

As for Shakespeare and similar writings, if we are mentally acting the whole thing we shall probably not err on the side of rapidity. It is a capital exercise to use marginal dissections of thought or voice effect in the finest passages on the lines shewn us by Canon Fleming in his invaluable book on "The Art of Reading and Speaking." But, of course, there are times when we must hurry on with ever-increasing speed if we want to give the right effect, as in parts of "The Diverting History of John Gilpin" (by the way a capital study for varied reading), or, again in Hood's description of a runaway horse, or the flashing from hill to hill of the beacon lights in Macaulay's Armada, or the oncoming armies of rats in the Pied Piper.

As for punctuation, let us eschew as far as possible printed helps and remember the value of what is known as the rhetorical pause—that momentary pause which we make whenever we want a word to stand out, or whenever we present some fresh mental picture, but for which we have no recognised printed sign.

Take this "Fragment" from T. E. Browne. I read it to you first without and then with the rhetorical pause, and you will at once see my meaning:

"Yon bird is strong to fly;
How straight the balanced pinions scoop,
Twin scimitars that carve the cloudy group;
Or rigid as a die,
Print their sad cyphers on the polished sky."

Then with the pause:

"Yon bird | is strong to fly ||
How straight | the balanced pinions | scoop
Twin scimitars | that carve the cloudy group ||
Or | rigid as a die |
Print their sad cyphers | on the polished sky."

The rhetorical pause should be used whenever we present a *fresh mental picture*.

As to the other points of emphasis, expression, modulation,

on which I have no time to dwell, let us remember that on our use of them depends our power of converting speech into music and painting. It has been well said, "There is but one art," and, as we study, we find we can unravel the subtle harmonies, the progressions, the constant changes, and we are encouraged to try and bring out through the cultured grace of our lips the beauty, the passion, and the pathos of our author's mind, throwing the weak parts into the back ground and bringing the strong ones into light.

Power is only attainable in this as in all other things through our own study and our own practice; but every one of us can master it if she so *wills* it: what has been called "the magic, the music, and the subtle witchery of the human voice."

Let us beware of all affectation and exaggeration, and by keeping *self* hidden be, for the time being, the author for our audience.

I will now endeavour to shew you by examples a very few of the beauties one can find scattered like gems in our English literature."

(Here followed selections from Rosetti, Macaulay, T. E. Browne, etc).

C. F. BARNETT.

Wednesday, May 3rd. Miss Drury in the chair.
Miss Pennethorne's paper on "Indirect Character Training" was read by Miss Drury.

INDIRECT CHARACTER TRAINING.

R. AMY PENNETHORNE.

You will probably have had your attention drawn to many of the great and direct aspects of Character Training—the giving of ideas, the inauguration of habits, the control of the will, the instruction of the conscience, etc. But there are some applications of more or less indirect methods of Character Training which might profitably be discussed. Not being present in the body, I cannot express direct personal opinions without fear of misunderstanding. These suggestions are necessarily crude and one-sided, but they are points for discussion rather than for agreement. Let us consider then—

1. The books read.
2. The games played.
3. The friends made.

1. *Do not* read children stories about other children. The sort of book which implies and supposes one life for the grown-up and another life and standard of conduct for the child, fatally undoes much of our work. Why confine their interests to Harry's naughty pranks and Laura's frocks, even in such a classic as "Holiday House?" Books about children are healthy reading for grown-ups, "lest we forget," but they retard a child's development. *Do* read them "boys' books," full of battle, murder, sudden deaths, accidents and adventures by field and flood. Clean horrors, whose origin is in accident and natural forces, never did anyone any harm, mentally or morally. To train the mind to face ugly facts without winking, and to listen unmoved to "seas of gore" is an invaluable training for matter-of-course composure when "issues fraught with life and death" suddenly arise. I am not indulging in one of those "sudden theories" which sting us splendidly and are never heard of again; instance